



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures: 27.19

Subject: Search Procedures For Youth Development Centers

Supersedes: DCS 20.33, 10/01/98;
27.19, 05/01/05

Local Policy: No
Local Procedures: Yes
Training Required: Yes
Applicable Practice Model Standard(s): Yes

Approved by:

Effective date: 07/01/98

Revision date: 10/01/05

Application

To All Department of Children's Services Youth Development Center Employees

Authority: TCA 37-5-106

Policy

To ensure the safety and security of youth development center employees and youth, thorough, unannounced, authorized searches of youth, visitors, volunteers, employees, youth property, youth living quarters, and other areas of youth development centers will be conducted frequently. Employees will utilize the least invasive search technique appropriate to the situation to ensure a safe environment.

Procedures

A. Written local procedures

1. Requirement

Each superintendent must develop written facility search procedures that are reviewed annually and disseminated as deemed appropriate by the superintendent.

2. Contents

The search plan must include the following:

- a) Why searches are conducted;

- b) How searches are conducted;
- c) When/where searches are conducted;
- d) Types of searches;
 - ◆ Room/area searches
 - ◆ Electronic scan (stationary scanner or hand held scanner)
 - ◆ Frisk search (students, visitors, volunteers, employees)
 - ◆ Strip search
 - ◆ Body cavity search (manual, instrument)

B. Search of the body**1. Scanning**

Any trained employee may use a hand held scanner to search youth, visitors, or employees for weapons or other metallic objects. The employee will not touch the youth, visitor, or employee in this search process.

2. Frisk search (“pat down”)

When it is required to conduct a frisk search of a youth, visitor, volunteer or employee a staff member of the same gender will perform the search.

3. Strip Search

- a) A strip search is only a visual inspection (i.e., looking in the mouth, ears, having youth spread buttocks) of the youth’s body.
- b) The facility search procedures must specify that a strip search is only permissible when:
 - ◆ A youth initially enters the youth development center.
 - ◆ A youth has been outside the facility and for any portion of the time outside the facility was not under the direct supervision of a staff member.

- ◆ There is reasonable suspicion that a youth is concealing an item that could be used as a weapon or other contraband that could endanger his/her well-being or the well-being of others. The use of a strip search for reasonable suspicion must be specifically approved by the Superintendent of the facility and thoroughly documented in an incident report. Only in the absence of the Superintendent will a designee of the superintendent approve a strip search.
 - ◆ Only strip search incidents for reasonable suspicion must be documented in an incident report.
- c) Strip searches will not be a routine part of procedures prior to or after visitation nor will they be a routine part of procedures when a youth is being placed in confinement
- d) The strip search inspection must be conducted by trained employees of the same gender and performed under private conditions.

4. Body Cavity Searches

- a) When there is probable cause to believe that a youth may be concealing contraband in a body cavity that would threaten the safety and security of the YDC or its personnel, only the Superintendent or in the absence of the Superintendent his/her designee may give authorization for a body cavity search. This authorization must be granted prior to the body cavity search.
- b) Only Health Care Personnel (Physician, Physician's assistant, or Nurse Practitioner) will conduct body cavity searches.
- d) Pregnant female body cavity searches may only be done by an Obstetrician-Gynecologist (OB-GYN) physician or nurse practitioner or in consultation with the OB-GYN physician.
- e) A witness/chaperone of the same gender as the recipient of the search must be present during the examination. If possible, the youth may choose the witness.
- f) The individuals involved must be sensitive to the personal dignity of the youth and the youth's right to privacy of his/her own body and all possible care must

be exercised to preclude injury during the search.

- g) As the search progresses, the youth must be given ample opportunity to voluntarily remove and surrender the suspected contraband.
- h) A forced body cavity search is not allowed. Any refusal by youth must be reported to the Superintendent/designee authorizing the search.
- i) Body cavity searches must be thoroughly documented in an incident report, in the youth's health record and in TNKids and must include the:
 - ◆ Date of search,
 - ◆ Type of search,
 - ◆ What was found, and
 - ◆ Name of the health professional performing the search.
- j) All confiscated contraband must be handled in accordance with DCS policy [27.21, Contraband](#).

C. Posted entrance/exit signs

A printed sign informing all persons upon entering the facility grounds that they are subject to being searched, must be posted in a noticeable location at all entrances and exits of the youth development center.

D. Training

All security employees will receive training in conducting searches, which will be documented in the employees training record.

Forms

None

Collateral Documents

None

Standards

ACA 3-JTS-3A-19

ACA 3-JTS-3A-20

ACA 3-JTS-3A-21

DCS Practice Model Standard – 8-306